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WINNOWINGS OF THE WIND

WALTER FLAVIUS McCALEB

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Winnowings of the Wind

By Walter Flavius McCaleb

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TO MARIE

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The Daffodils I Knew

O bonny golden daffodils,
I wonder if your starry eyes
Look yet into those wondrous skies
I knew, and if your breath yet fills
The air that calmed my fevered youth.
Sweet sunny daffodils,
Though long the time is gone, in truth,
I see you peering forth again
With faces bared to sun and rain,
The first of all spring's darlings, you,
With burning kisses and the dew
Of heaven upon your lips—to blow
In yonder spot that onetime knew
My steps, so oft I came to show
My love. It cannot be that death
Has sealed within his cell your envied breath,
Or that he for a season stills
The golden heart of fire that thrills
With every zephyr note. I know,
Rare darling daffodils,
You only sleep to rouse
From winter's frosty house
With many a nod and sigh
And twinkle of radiant eye;
For lo, I dream of a halcyon time
And of a lovèd Southland clime,
The while I sing my votary's rime—
O bonny, golden daffodils.

A Ship of Mine

On yonder gray horizon's rim there stands
A ship of mine. Long since it sailed to sea,
One of the white and golden argosy
That bore my hopes afar to farthest lands.
What gallant sails, what sheets and iron bands
To cope with storm! Mine other ships—ah me!—
And cargoes have gone down where silently
The gull dips 'round the wrecks upon the sands.

Is this last ship that looms so distantly
To fade beyond the line where wave and sky
Forget themselves in one long dream of time?
Is it to furl its wings; is it to fly
With courier speed to bring me tale of crime,
Or treasure rare, or grief, or love sublime?

No Day So Dark

No day so dark
    But some white gleam
    From heaven a-stream
Will leave its mark.

Thou Art Gone

Thou art gone from out my life's brief hour
As ceases bird-song or the power
    Of magic or the wonder of love! . . .
Thou art gone. . . . And I do tread as one
Entranced a last long beam of sun
    Athwart Hyperion's grove.

Meseems I drift on waters dark
Where is no wave nor any barque—
    No life, save me and Memory.
We two, and Silence stealing near,
Sail on to where the morning clear
    Is luminous with thee.

Twilight

All dun and lurid burned the dying day
Along the blear horizon to the west,
Shooting athwart the pilèd clouds' snow crest
Broad golden streams to dye the world's array
In colors passing mortal to arrest;
And in my deepest daring heart I blest
The hallowed hour that swooned so far away.

And then the tender after-glow, the gloom
And dusk born of the night stole up to hide;
The stars peered coldly out across the tomb
Where lies my Love so low the storms ne'er chide.
Nor ever stirs to night's sad lullaby
The faintest chord of that soul's harmony.

The Approach of Winter

The white hydrangea plumes that faintly lean
Against my window fade to ghostliness;
And faltering winds haunt every leaf and spray
And stir the grasses, driving summer's troop
Of insects where their wings are folded close
For many an hour of frost. Then, wintry sleep—
Down in the primal caves of Death—enfolds
In slumbrous robes each tiny soul against
A dawn that lies far out beyond the pale
Of dream, beyond the star-lit spheres of Time.

Lines

Fled—when the evening was swooning,
And the winds were hushed at their crooning
With the cold and the mist that were born
Where the dusk and the darkness are torn
Out of chaos—my Love fled away,
Past the night—past the light—past the day!

Aurora

I

The gray light kindled the eastern wold
And thee I saw with thy hair of gold—
    An aura of light on life's rose-river.
Lo, I worshiped aloud in a fane of mine,
And pledged my love in many a line—
    The love of a heart that nothing could sever.

II

But thou didst flee in the shimmering heat,
And left me alone at the trysting-seat
    To come not again, no never—no never.
So the key is lost and the string unstrung,
And the day drops low and the song's unsung—
    The melody flown forever and ever.

My Life

My life is like a vagrant autumn shower
That hangs on high a dark-lit dreary hour—
Only a passing human cloud, all tears—
Weeping a moment ere the day-star clears.

Sweet Be Thy Waking

Darkly the night rides over the hills,
Softly the dusk-wind cradles and stills;—
Sweet be thy waking,
When morn is a-breaking.

Drowsily drone the tireless bees,
Dreamily ring the harps i' the trees;—
Sleep till thy waking,
With never an aching.

Lonely I lie with lids wide apart,
Longing for thee, dear absent heart;—
Sweet be thy waking—
My heart is a-breaking.

Amidst the Corn

The roseate dew lay on the grass
Where strayed my love, the loveliest lass
That e'er at breaking morn
Went singing i' the corn.

The light of heaven lay on her hair,
The blue within her eyes, as there
She went a-dreaming, half love-lorn,
Amidst the waving corn.

Touchmenot

I know the daintiest flower
That blooms in the garden plot,
For I have wandered and wandered,
And seen in many a fragrant spot
A myriad of them and all a-blowing,
Dancing, dosing, dreaming, glowing,
Closing i' the twilight.
But she is all to me—
All that they are not,
Though they call her in derision
Just a "Touchmenot."

Lo, the name is sweet and tender,
Tender memory—and I love what
They decry. What can
The rabble know of her
The winsome-eyed,
Of her the deified!
What god or demon, sprite
Or gnome; what burst of night
Or glimpse of day have I to thank
That she at last—of the flower-face—
Unfolds her charmèd grace
Like fragrant petals narcissus-sprung,
And flings them on the wind to me,
So that my eager, eager hands
Might overladen be
With all the wonders of the lands
That lie beyond the regions of the sun.

Touchmenot, dear heart, forget me not.
Though all the flowers fade and pass
Into forgetfulness—alas—
Thy name shall linger still,
And all my rapturous praise
Shall be upborne to thee,
Like incense from the golden urn
Where all the ashes burn
Of earth's immortal lovers. . . .
And I too am immortal,
Loving thee past all the limits
Set by space and time.

So down in the garden grow and grow;
Spread all thy lovely leaves
Upon the air that grieves
Because I love thee so.
Open thy fragrant bosom's deep
And let me, like the bee, creep in;
It is so warm down in thy petalled heart
I know that all the world will envy me,
But not avail to draw me forth—
I bow my head, now close me in eternally.

Had I Wing or Lute or Tone

Had I wing of bird or bee,
Would I bide apart from thee?
Had I voice of lissome glee
How I'd tune it merrily!—
Or vibrant lute of magic string
How I'd thrum and as lover sing!
Had I wing or lute or tone,
Would I bind my lips and moan,
Rob my restive soul of song
That sings of thee the whole time long?

My Prayer

To live and love and lovèd be—
To work the blessed day—
To do, to fare, to fight—be free—
This is my prayer alway.

Alice

If you only knew
The narrow nights and futile sodden days
Since thine and mine were widened, parted ways,
A night burst through—
If you only knew!

If you only knew
The feverish heart-beats that have hourly sent
My purple pulse tiding to you all pent
With love tales true—
If you only knew!

If you only knew
The longing that has raided all unseen
The misty regions of my soul's demesne
In search of you—
If you only knew!

Disillusion

Faded the blossoms she sent;
Lost is the fragrance that went
    Swift to my heart. . . .

Slow beats the pulse that was pent,
Laggard the winds are and spent;
    Voiceless—we part.

Yesterday

O, the way
To the lost yesterday
Lies as vague and as far
As my dead hopes are—
All the gibbering ghosts,
The wan beckoning hosts!

O, the way
To the lost yesterday
You can find if you go
Where the hot winds blow
By the parchèd rose-tree
Near the sun-rimmèd sea.

O, the way
To the lost yesterday
I have traveled in vain;
But run ne'er again
Be the guerdon or crown
Or tryst of thistle-down!

O, the way
To the lost yesterday
You may take if you choose;
But to take is to lose,
For I know all the play
On the road to yesterday.

Robin, I Miss Thee

Blithe Robin, I miss thee! Sweet was thy song,
Vibrant and shrill that ravished the hill
Of thy summer all the day long.

Art fled to the Southland deep in the sun,
Trilling again with haughty disdain,
With no mind to thy notes as they run?

But soon thou wilt come, and, boding no fear,
Sing for thy soul with the Spring as thy goal,
Waking worlds with thy orison clear.

Can I Forget?

A time when sank the sun
Into the dusk, you did forget
My love—you did forget.

The clouds were lowering, dun—
The sun had set, your love had set,
Your love for me had set.

And when the night had run,
The morn whispered I should forget—
But, dear, can I forget?

Lead Me On

O fadeless hour that first I trembling drew
Thee to my breast, and at thy breathing knew
Thou lovedst me. Dear Memory, the day
Is gone and yet 'tis here heart-held alway.
A thousand thousand ages, Love, may pass
And yet the light of eyes—O lovely lass—
Rare azure eyes, shall lead me on to dare
Dim heights the whither all true lovers fare.

Dear, shall we not love on and on through æons
And æons, and harken to the happy pæans
And pastorals of all the spirit-clan
Who sing together as immortals can?
Ah, we shall see the star-dust fall and hear
The chimes of spheres thrice seven. . . . Draw
thou near
Sweetheart, nor leave me for a little space;
'T is dark beyond the pale of thy pure face.

Along the River Marge

There were cherry blossoms all a-blowing
By the fragrant river-side;
A myriad eyes were glowing,
Radiant, joyous, glorified—
Or vaguely, sweetly mystified—
In the dear and dusky eventide.
O'er the greening hill the lowing
Cattle wander home,
While the silent slowing
River, ever onward flowing,
Laughs a little when there come
Splashing feet to stay its going. . . .
O the summer-tide is strewing
All the world with garlands bright
Against the coming of the Night.

I Shall Not Mind

Blow, blow thou winter's wind,
I shall not mind
Thy ravings, hoarse and chill
Ay tho' they be; they fill

Me nor again with fear,
Nor bodings drear,
Nor melancholy's spite.
In sooth, the balm's strange might

And vague oblivion
At last have done
To death the thoughts that filled
This soul of mine, and chilled

For aye the pulse of life.
Nor drum, nor fife,
Nor air, nor voice, nor lute
Can rouse these chords that mute

Await some dawning day
To thrill as they
Were wont to do in times
Long past, when she sang rhymes

That breathed of love Elysian.—
O heavenly vision!
Blow, blow, thou winter's wind
And moan—I shall not mind.

Lullaby

The mists are blown away,
And the clouds of gray
    Are fading far in the West:—
Sleep my Love, sleep my Love,
Heaven looks down from above
    On thy rest.

'Tis spent the latest ray
That marks the line of day
    Athwart the goal of the West:—
Sleep my Love, sleep my Love,
The angels are whispering above
    Thou art blest.

My Star

"All that I know of a certain star"
That hangs in splendor where the heavens bar
    Retreating day in dazzling white,
    Leading hence the hosts of night
To reel and fly as the hours die;—

"All that I know of a certain star"
That burns like glory where the angels are,
    Is that my heart proclaims that she
    Is light of vast eternity,—
By night, by day—a star alway.

Can It Be Love?

I know not what lies yonder near the night,
Trembling in the iridescent rainbow-light—
Can it be love?

I know not what sings by the gate of day,
In radiant raiment—rose-crowned roundelay—
Can it be love?

All in My Garden-Place

I

On yesternight I saw uprise
A tender bud with wistful eyes—
By magic in my garden-place
It grew, and lo, its blossom face!

How sweet and innocent, how fair,
How honey-pure, how unaware
Of mortal touch; and that dear look
All dimpled as an eddying brook.

II

Was it a glance, a fragrant touch,
Or breeze that lingered over-much
Against her cheek that wrought the blight?
Pale are the eyes once dark as night!

Why linger now, the spell is spent
And all the glamour 's gone that lent
Her grace and beauty none compare. . . .
How cold doth cling the garden air.

May

Oh, this mountain side is glorious,
If you care to stray awhile,
For the spring reigns thrice victorious—
Flowers, flowers many a mile!

Lo the pansy's piebald hood
Nods and nods with many a sigh,
For morning breathes along the wood,
Waking every sleeping eye.

And the daisies at my feet
Peep with modest eyes demure,
And startled violets, blithe and sweet,
Round the runnel open bluer.

Winecup bowls are crimson-red,
Swaying high in joyous glow—
A bumper full to winter dead,
A toast for all the summer show.

I've Seen Thy Face

There is no choice—
I gaze and gaze at the eastern skies,
Where lies the blue of thy beauteous eyes—
I've seen thy face and heard thy voice.

There is no choice
But love thee, love thee, love thee true,
And bind the sheaves as thou bid'st me do—
I've seen thy face and heard thy voice.

So Strange the Light

The eve draws down, the daylight dies,
And over earth a stillness lies
As on that awful day when fell
The dark!—Does it come again the spell

Of blindness stealing softly through
A noon of dream—a noon anew
Dim-lit by eyes that once ashine
Struck altars in this heart of mine?

So strange the light in this day-dark,
So thick the way I cannot mark
My course that's set with many a trace
And vision fair of her lost face.

Remembering an Ascent of Popocatepetl

O sing to me again
As you sang on that day—
As you sing alway—
O breath of the shivering pine,
O heart of the wild, wild wood—
Strike louder the swelling refrain,
Thunder the walls of thy white domain!
Gray mountain so hoar and sublime—
On whose crown rests the snow
Fallen like a mask long ago,—
Fallen low, fallen low,
From heaven's gray dome—
Flash but again to mine eye;
Bend all thy blue, burnished sky,
And I were young as the day
I clambered scarce breathing and cold
Thy deep forest side and thy helmet of snow!
O mortal, or angel, or both,
Or who hath my soul in charge,
Hear! once again ere I go
Swift through the valley of death,
Let the high-sweeping wind
Blow its frost-crystaled breath
O'er the cataract-fountain
Through the pines on the mountain,
And sing to my soul as it sang to me then—
As it sang to me then.

Truth

Thy voice to me is dear as spirit songs
Of angels playing at the dawn in throngs
Along the eastern battlemented height
Of Joy, where only thou dost reign with light.

Thy face to me a heaven is of stars
In field celestial, whence the bars
Of life are dropped for one to see
That heaven is truth and truth eternity.

Palma

And Palma chose him for her minstrel,
. . . Sordello, whom
Anon they laid within that old font-tomb.
—*Browning*

Maid, thou with eyes mysterious and dark
With blue, and brow like Pietà's, and locks
No child of Lombardy's could vie—list: Rocks
Not still that mazy wood its branches?—hark,
Doth not its whisper thrill old Goito stark
And hoar? No more the orpine patch? No docks
I' the familiar fields? What is it mocks
Thee bending o'er that font-tomb's silent mark?

He rests, for Heaven's balm doth soothe his soul.
And thou?—ah, thou with eyes all stained and hair
Unbound dost come at even's mournful toll
To weep beside the martyred maids that bare
Their hearts in marble penance—to weep for him
Who loved that spot a-stir with spirits dim.

The Mockingbird at Midnight

Yester I heard a voice at the night-deep hour—
A note that rose upon the stifling tide
Of heat, and windless, nigh the moon
Till falling earthward in a swoon
Of ecstasy and sweet delirium,
It trembled in the tree-top's canopy,
A moment clung, then faded utterly.

Consolation

To wake and see th' undimming dawn
And hear the lute of light
In triumph at the dæmons gone
Adrift upon the night—

To lure myself with languid verse
The lanes of life among;
To lift myself beyond the curse
On the wide wings of song!

Metamorphosis

I feel the first faint breath of Autumn, dear;
Slow steals it o'er the hills, across the vale
And on and on, voicing its tongueless tale
Of pathos strange and wild. With naught of fear
The flowers lift their darling heads to cheer
All mindless of the forest's weary wail
That eddies round. . . . Why art so sad and pale?
Awake, for lo the winter-night is near.

And thou shalt dream. But when thine eyes again
Ope wide to day, the glamour's gone—and they
Shall glance a metamorphosed world; the rain
Has sullied, the wind has frayed the petals gay
And moans among the littered leaves that fly
Distraught to lie where you and I must lie.

Shall I Not Hope?

Above the shivering trees in yonder grove
The snow is whirling dumb in its dismay;
Beyond the flying clouds of freezing gray
The waves are wailing loud along the cove;
And round thy heart the dismal day hath wove
A night where fearful phantasies delay
The words I wait impatient but alway.—
Shall I not hope that truly thou wilt love?

Some morn the dawn will drowse the eastern wold,
And sunny life go bounding free again;
White, whitening buds will burst and burgeoning spring
Blow every spray:—ah, then I'll know the gold
At thy heart's core has run, and that the reign
Of kings on earth is at its welcoming.

The Secret of Your Being

He said that you were mortal, that your soul was
of the dust,
That the radiance of your beauty was a thing
that would outrust;

And I rose in earnest anger and I cursed the
falsifier,
While I stammered half-unknowing that there
lies a region higher. . . .

Do you blame me for my temper, I who love
you, love you so,
For I know you are of heaven;—do you ask
me how I know?

It is futile to upbraid me; not a word I'll answer
you—
Lo, the secret of your being burns beyond the
nether blue.

They whisper I am dreaming, that a phantasy of
mind
Mocks the inner-seeing Vision, that I grope
about as blind.

But I know the *you* I'm loving lives beyond all
human ken,
That the hands I now am holding will reach
back to earth again.

If you go before me, Mary, you will surely not
forget;
So I'll let them laugh and mock me—I shall bide
with no regret.

Let them whisper I am dreaming; let me dream,
for I would rest;
Take my hands and hold them closer—see, the
sun is in the west.

Cor Cordium

So there my letters all in ashes lie
Awaiting some gray gust of time to fly
Some whither, then to rise not ever again. . . .
The gods forgive; you never knew the pain
Nor dared to think what never-ending crimes
You wrought when danced the flames through all my rhymes
That raced with the best blood of one that loved—
Whose every sun-lit word and action proved
A steadfast love! . . . Far as the east and west
Upfly the ashes of my heart—the test
Of fire has burned into the very core
Of one who dreams, of one who weeps, no more.

Without Thee

Art gone in truth, or does my mind
Belie, or am I come too blind
With gazing at thee as the sun?
Thy image 'twas that waked my song
That urged me all the days along—
Dear days of dreams how shortly done!

Without thee how can I live on,
How do, how dare, the spirit gone
To come not any morning more?
My life will cease like a dull spark
And all the quick resolving dark
Reclaim my heart burned to the core.

On the Mountains Overlooking Mexico

Tonight I see the moonlight on thy mountains,
Mexico,
And the grayish mists thy marshes breathe,
Mists that sweep moist-winged
The dimming heights cast up to guard thee
When all the nights were still
And no man wept.

Cast up in a moment?
Ah, who knows or cares for that?
To him who wandered round
The ridgèd rim that skirts thy valley,
When yet the day was new,
What meaning spake these awful sentinels? . . .
Methinks he knew in that far time of woe,
And plague, and blind enduring evil,
Mexico.

Far down I see thy fading lights
Melt in a pale unearthly glow;
And know the pulse of thy great heart
Throbs faster, faster,
Mexico.
And in thy widening veins
What scarlet-stainèd blood
Of poisoned generations! . . .

Lo! the moonlight's on thy crest,
And the night's fold drops all
Snugly round thee;

And the silent, ceaseless flow
Of drowsing time fills up thy cup—
O Mexico—
And mine.—Thou dost not murmur, yet
This saddened heart of mine bemoans,
I know not why, . . . but rest thou now;
And I would dream—alas, in vain.

Dover at Dawn

Hail mighty Albion's cliff of massy white,
And Dover drowsing lifeless at thy feet!
Full many centuries has England's seat
Been sentineled by thee: upon thy height
The fires of hope, alarm,—by day, by night—
Have burned their beacons:—lo! the Conqueror's fleet;
Or woe the proud Armada's thousand sheet,
Or list, Napoleon's thundering guns affright!

Adieu, pale cliff—the morn advances high—
Thou awe-inspiring guardian 'gainst all foes!
Were England steadfast, true, as thou, the world
Would fail ere spoilsmen sprang with martial cry
To seize the land—would pass with all its shows
To nothingness, thy glorious banner furled.

If Thou Shouldst Come Not Ever Again

I call to thee across the wilds that pen
Thee in—this city-jungle rent of men—
In vain I call in spirit-tones apace,
But comes no answer hence from out the space;

Only sounds the din of clanging cars,
Or drumming hoof on pavement; even the stars
Are gone: no thing doth heed my words too rife
With love's lorn messages, too red of life.

If thou shouldst come not ever again to me
To bid me live, the sacred walls to thee
Shall breathe my love—then break no silence
more. . . .
How void the world since thou hast passed my
door.

Out of the Past

Lo we talked of golden themes
'Neath the starlight's silken gleams,
Drifting where the many streams
Of life unite:
And the river to the sea,
Murmured low to Love and me:
"Love thy love, life's swift of flight."

Softly flew the mindless hours,
Fools we left Love's luring bowers,
Passed unplucked the fragrant flowers
Upon the shore.
So the gift divine was lost—
Youth and love! . . . All demon-crossed
Seas surge round us evermore.

She Never Knew

O count it not to her;—she never knew
My day-star rose and set within her eyes:
Nor ever dreamed my soul in voiceless cries
Pined for her love. And yet the long year through
I saw her—fair as a wondrous rose that grew
Serene in the sweet wood, kissed by the dew,
Swayed by the wind, touched by the flame that lies
Along the dawn—radiant under the skies.

Anon the winter came to frost my flower
Fresh chapleted with love. Portentous hour!
How drear and desolate are all the days
Since she sleeps yonder where the dark clouds lower
To lace their light'nings with the sun's last rays,
And where my heart is lost in life's thick haze.

Through the Vale

FIRST VOICE

Lament not he died,
Child of thy heart; woe betide
If thou mourn'st as the winds
Through an arch which the ivy upbinds.

SECOND VOICE

Am I a bride or a sprite?
Do I dream, do I hear
With the heart over-near,
Do you speak me outright?

FIRST VOICE

Forget thou hast cried
Where the frail poppies blow all purple-
eyed
O'er his grave
Where the lilacs wave.

SECOND VOICE

As a bride
Of the realm of the flowers
I shall bide
And my guardian Hours
For dear love shall stay near
For my sake and for his, and the clear
Blue of sky shall bluer be still
And all of the Shadows shall linger at will
To answer the dream
When it breaks at the Gleam. . . .

FIRST VOICE

What's the worth of a tear
Or the leaf of a year
    That is spent?

SECOND VOICE

Nay the worth of a tear
    That is spent
Or the leaf of a year
    That is sent
On the wind to the west
Is as gold from the test
    Of the fire.
    I aspire
To mount upward and on
Until our souls in the dawn
Shall unite and remember how fair
Was our vale over there.
Let me weep
For my soul from the deep
Presses on for the leap
Past the barrier steep
Where the stars dark the Space
That is lit by the light of His face.

Memories Three

A silver silver moon,
Across the dome a cloud that clears apace,
And all the midnight filled with starry grace.

A rose asleep at noon,
Wind-worried, drooping for a drowsy space,
And on the grass the fragrant petal's trace.

And One that went too soon,
All fain of life's lost, headlong, heedless race—
Abides with me the memory of a face.

Adrift

Ah, love is wrecked and gone adrift—
I see upon the torturing lift
Of fitful, false, unmindful ocean
Golden braids swim slow in motion,
Swept athwart the spirit-grace
Of eyes and cheeks and lips . . . dear
face. . . .
Wan eyes that move no more the stars
To lend their lusters for the wars
Of love; fair cheeks that blanched the rose;
Sweet lips that now so mute upclose
Forsaken of the lyric joy; and hair
Of gold, so golden with the snare
Of life! . . . I lean upon the land
And trace a name deep in the sand.

To Venus

Venus, slow descending,
In thy flight I read a page
As wide as time's unending;
The doom of things in every age
Is blazoned in thy starry light.
Oh, to be quite
Like such a glory-spot—
To sink in utter radiance
Like a dazzling blot
In night's deep robe, to dance
From one dark æon to another—
Venus, to be as thou, eternal mother!

The Lees in an Undrained Bowl

O a minor chord 's astir in my heart—
Love lost, love lost—
Sings ever of her with a poignant start.

'Tis the theme of an hour that once unrolled—
Love crossed, love crossed—
Sings on and on through the ages old.

And a song of sin 't will sound in my soul—
Storm tossed, storm tossed—
Because of the lees in an undrained bowl.

Out of the Dark and Rain

Come, sing to me as you were wont to do
A time agone, agone—so long ago.
Ah, I remember well the hour as though
'Twere yesterday, a tuneful angel, you
Did steal into my heart to soothe, as dew
A parchèd blossom's yearning stills—I know
'Tis many a silent hour, yet sing, e'en now,
The lines I'm longing so to hear a-new.

Sweetheart, I meant not that sad-toned refrain—
Nay, sing again the words forever dear
As thou! For too much alway I am prone
To linger lone and lorn against the pane,
Striving out of the dark and rain to hear
The note of hope I knew—so long unknown.

She Lies Asleep

Wake! but strike thy lute no more,
For on the farthest Eden shore
She lies asleep.
So wake and weep,
But strike thy singing lute no more.

Calm, she sleeps as one bereft
Of sorrows treasured from the theft
Of robber time.
See how sublime
She rests, of sorrows all bereft.

Peace, nor stay the stirring tear
Beside her lorn and lonely bier;
She soon will pass
To dust—alas! . . .
What can avail a burning tear?

Wake, but strike thy lute no more,
For on the farthest Eden shore
She lies asleep.
So wake and weep,
But strike thy singing lute no more.

De Profundis

O let me sleep
Who ne'er again can weep.
All throttling are the pains that leap
The chasms of my heart,
Whence scurrying hordes upstart,
The brandishing dervish-thoughts, with dart
And sword, and rumble of distant thunder!
What once was whole—
O this my soul—
Is shattered, torn asunder,
And all my dreams are buried under.
Still, in its sacred place
I grope to find the trace
Of a once-lovèd face.
All else has gone awrack
On this my life's white track
Of washing sand seashore,
Where run the eddies evermore
And running ever croon
A sibyl-sounding rune
Of one I still adore,
Of one all faithless as the moon.

O let me sleep,
Ye keepers of the deep,
And dream awhile—warm-housed
By Silences—with lips all mute

That once were roused
To riot by the blameless fire
Of Love! Consumed by heart's desire,
'Twas I who dreamed that higher
And higher we two should mount
And call the very stars to make account
Of Love's Elysian goal,
Where sound the chants of soul to soul.

O let me sleep
Ye angels of the steep
Incline of heaven, who never grieve,
Nor grieving ne'er can tell
When one doth languish in the lairs of
hell!

To Shelley

Master of destiny, sun-girdler—thou
Soarer beyond the last confine of space—
Singer sublime: O pray thee deign, fair face,
To look upon me but a moment now,
For I would joyfully lay on thy brow
The lyric's laurel wreath. In thy sweet grace,
Immortal lover, let me find a place;
For I, one of the humblest, come to bow
Before thy sacred shrine where kneel the wise
And brave and true. Thou wert so kind and just,
With heaven, love, truth mirrored in thine eyes,
Thou wilt not scorn—here will I wholly trust
Till the pale Shadow steal with silent pall
To stay my strivings and my anxious call.

In the After-Light

I know not how drag past the days,
So loveless, lonely, are the ways
I tread since She is fled my sight.

But know I well the laggard feet
That lead to where our paths shall meet
Far out in some great afterlight. . . .

Charon

O Charon, Charon! warder of that stream
As dark as death, thy blear and sateless eye
Gloats on the scene where soul on soul lies by,
Awaiting thee to ferry them. I deem
Thee one of bravest arm, yet one whose dream
Must be a nightmare where the dead do fly
In tattered shrouds, and call thee names and cry
For Erebus to show them where the gleam
Of suns unspoken lights the hills that rise
In that drear land where Styx forever rolls.
O Charon! when my soul comes down and lies
With thee afloat, hush thou the bell that tolls
The muffled passing—let me rest and sleep
Through mists and cold and deathless night's long keep.

To Spain

Great land where breathed Iberian and Moor—
That gave us lore and lost philosophies,
And breed of men that bent on high emprise
Woke wide the Western World—what swift allure
Drew thee apart?—what holy zeal impure
Belied thy soul and glozed with gloom thine eyes
To blind the way thy sons were wont to prize?—
Canst tell why hast in all become so poor?

Uprise ye ghosts of banished Saracen
And Jew, marshal thy martyrs, Bolivar,
And Cuba thine—these hiss the dolorous word:
America nor knows nor shall again
The flag that flouted the rights of men, that heard
No peal of liberty blown from afar!

Sleep and Death

A longed-for silence still as primal death was
mine.
Asleep in some fair-flowered, starry cave—
Free from the toils, the drag-nets and the brine
Of tears and life's red-bruisèd grape (I crave
No more), I dreamed, and all was peace; nor
scorn,
Nor contumely, the jagged lash which fate
Had wielded; silence, sleep were mine; no morn
Would rouse me from my dear and dreamful
state.

Alack, a time I did awake and found
My prison cold and damp; and Death beside
Me pressed my lids so close I cried aloud
In bitterness for swift reprieve! Fast bound
My limbs refused to stir.—Said Death:
"Abide
Awhile with me and Silence marble-browed."

The Ideal

I dreamed awhile and wrought the gossamers
In filmy fabrics fit for her the one
That rose for me the transcendental sun.

She rose for me the very sun to lead
The utmost way, to wake the world of night
Wherein I groped ere blazed the sudden Light—

The light that shines adown the drifting path
That lies across the distant earth away—
Wherein I walk and wait against a day.

The Lost Caravan

It was a wild and wide expanse of sand—
Bare, blazing sand; far-stretching, farther
than
The eye of mortal reacheth, or e'er can,
It lay a dismal waste. A ghastly band
Went straggling on: each with his withered hand
Shut out the flaming day as on they ran
In vain a lost mirage. Accursèd ban
To scorch beneath a sun where deserts, fanned
By black simoon, rise high in air to blot
The heavens out! With tongues distended,
blank,
Brown faces—earth and air and sky are not.
Oblivion, dark as that by Lethe's bank,
Now spreads apace; for lo the last is spent,
And lies where howl the winds a hoarse lament.

Since You Have Proven False

There is so little left
Since you have proven false,
I seem of all bereft.

Of all bereft am I
Since all I had I gave,
My heart, which there doth lie—

There mid the rose leaves crushed
(The flowers I'd wrought for you)—
The songs forever hushed.

The Coming of Autumn

Shrilly the cricket close in the grass
Shivers that summer is dead;
Wearily race the fallen leaf-throngs,
Rustling that summer is fled;
Sad is the hum of the hurrying bee
Gleaning the floweret shed;
Faint is the note of the curlew's call
Far in the dome overhead;—
The sun in the west capped over with cloud
Shatters the sky with its red;
The winds in the trees whisper woe, whisper woe—
And Echo is all trembling with dread.

Shipwreck

Low surged the madding waves an eve, and fast
The dusk and murky gloom closed in the day;
Dull, desolately, broke the chilling spray
Along the deck! The mists uprose, the blast
Drave loud against the singing cords and mast
A-quiver; while above the dread dismay
The demons roared and tore the sails away—
White sails that once to wooing winds were cast.

The night's black pall hung on th' remorseless air
That swept the writhing sea, that whipped with cold
The whitened whitecaps and the floating hair
Of one too glorious for a story told,
Of one whose fame a pearl endures for me,
Who search in vain for her the shoreless sea.

Motes i' the Sun

O the dreams that we dream
Are like motes in a gleam,
A bare burnished beam
O' the sun.
(Motes i' the sun
That glimmer and run
Twixt the light
And the night.)

Twixt the light and the night,
Lo the shadow, the might
And the hastening flight
To the sun!
(Motes i' the sun
That glimmer and run
Twixt the light
And the night.)

Still we dream as we creep
Through the cavernous deep
Ere we take the long leap
'Neath the sun.
(Motes i' the sun
That glimmer and run
Twixt the light
And the night.)

We 're but dreams of a day,
Then we pass like the spray
On the wind—haste away
    Ere the sun.
(Motes i' the sun
That glimmer and run
Twixt the light
And the night.)

Debâcle

This dark is so intense, the starless void
So aching black, the world so unannoyed
Of winds or any sound save the slow drip
Of my heart's blood far on the outer rip
Where runs my life's low tide in silence deep!—
I long to lose me in abysmal sleep.

Thy hand 'twas crushed the sun and smote the
stars
From space; thy voice that raised th' Æolian bars
Against the winds, that set the Echoes all
A-rout; thy perfidy that reared the pall
Where lies my heart entombed to rouse no more
Until the dawn dart through the golden door.

The Days of the Summer are Dead

There's a ring in the air of the Autumn, child,
For the days of the summer are dead;
And lo! at thy feet and high o'er thy head
Are the flying red hosts of the wilderness wild—
The sighing dead ghosts of the wilderness, child.
And the song that is sung is a requiem mass,
For low, low down in the darkening grass
Are the daisies and buttercups sleeping—alas!—
All breathless and silent. How golden the dawn
When their spirits shall rouse along the dim lawn
Of some dreamful Arcadian summer! Child,
There's a ring in the air of the Autumn wild.

Love Resurgent

I

What is it that rouses the sleeping flower souls,
And plants them aflame 'round the valleys and knolls,
When the moist winds do blow?

What is it that wakens the cardinal's chant
And sets all the wilderness songsters apant—
Is it spring with its show?

The robin that late warmed his crest in the sun—
Has he heard a far call and his journey begun
With no thought of the snow?

II

To the slumbering seed-souls Love calleth aloud
And they burst all ablaze their clay-sealing shroud—
'Tis the end of their woe.

Love in the heart strings a harp in the throat!
It tunes every line to an untutored note—
O I know—O I know!

As far as may be this world from the stars
I can hear her soft voice and no tyranny bars,
For I go—lo I go.

To the Dying Century

Morning found thee, mother, crying
'Midst the crumbled ruin of thrones
And shattered chains and bleaching bones
That gave us Liberty.

Dusk-tide now, and thou art dying
Broken-hearted at the boom
Of guns that groan a sullen doom
To dreams of Liberty.

Lafcadio Hearn

Strange wilding from thy native hearthstone fled
Adream toward the opal orient sun
To keep a tryst with Faith and Beauty—Love:
Hast fared with all thy glory-garlands trove
Across th' Pacific sea Nirvana-ward;
Lo, art with Buddha's sainted soulful dead!

A Vision

From the highest ebon peak of night,
Brighter than the star-dust's prismed light,
    Burning through the intervening gloom
A single face of glory fills mine eyes
    With radiance like to that when the last doom
Shall echo round the stricken, silent skies.

In the Dark

It is so dreary playing in the dark,
With only little lamps of hope to light
The mazes of the way.

I am so weary staying in the dark,
The flicker of the slender candles quite
Obliterates the day. . . .

I wait for Mary, straying in the dark,
And shall until the gods in full requite
And put the lamps away.

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